

SYNERGY EFFECT OF TEAMWORK IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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The modern economic environment and labour market have made and will continue making work and workers more flexible, adjustable to new conditions and challenges. That is why in educating a future professional we should pay as much attention to the development of transferable (soft, social) skills as to the profession-specific (hard, technical) skills. Such soft skills include communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving skills and others that may be in high demand whatever job one can take. For example, project work has increased 40-fold over the past 20 years, making collaboration skills more important than ever [1].

It has long been confirmed that teamwork is likely to result in synergy effect [2] when team's output significantly exceeds that which individual team members would have achieved working separately. We want to show that this may apply not only to manufacturing, business or scientific activities, but also to language learning.

Unfortunately, a common practice in learning English has been that a student performed a task individually and was assessed only by the teacher. On the other hand, pair and group activities have proved their effectiveness in all aspects of language learning. To understand how these methods work, we undertook a survey [3] among the first-year students of NTU "KhPI" asking them to compare the frequency, efficiency and attractiveness of traditional teaching methods (translation, reading aloud, learning dialogues by heart etc.) and advanced group work methods such as warming-ups, brain-storming, role-plays, presentations etc. Surprisingly, despite the fact that the students seemed to enjoy and actively participated in the group activities and teamwork, in the survey they evaluated more traditional practices higher than the innovative ones. Still, we want to emphasize that English teachers have to overcome this long-cherished tradition of individual work and hence individual responsibility because our task is also to help our students meet 21-st century job challenges. One of the advantages of teamwork in an English class is that it combines and enhances many other skills. For example, when you perform any task in a team (or just with a partner), you require communication skills since you need to express your thoughts and receive a feedback, negotiation skills since you have to listen to your partner and come to a common decision, problem solving and critical thinking skills since you do not have a ready-made solution.